

Attachment One

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Requests Comments on the Proposed Changes to Standards for Defining Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Areas.

On October 20, OMB released the recommendations from the Metropolitan Area Standards Review Committee (MASRC) for changes to OMB's standards for defining metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. This is the first major revision of these concepts since 1970, when OMB developed new areas such as Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas (PMSA's) and Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA's). MASRC has recommended a Core-Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs) classification to replace the current Metropolitan Area (MA) classification. The cores (densely settled concentrations of population) for this classification would be Census Bureau defined urbanized areas and smaller densely settled "settlement clusters." The settlement clusters are new areas to be identified for the 2000 Census. CBSAs would be defined around these cores. This CBSA classification has three types of areas based on the total population of all cores in the CBSA:

1) Megapolitan Areas defined around cores of at least 1,000,000 population; 2) Macropolitan Areas defined around cores of 50,000 to 999,999 population; and 3) Micropolitan Areas defined around cores of 10,000 to 49,999 population. Those counties containing the cores, should become the central counties of the CBSA's. Territory outside of Megapolitan, Macropolitan and Micropolitan Areas would be termed "Outside CBSAs." The MASRC has recommended the use of counties and equivalent entities as the building blocks for statistical areas throughout the United States and Puerto Rico, including the use of counties as the primary building blocks for statistical areas in New England. MASRC also recommended that Minor Civil Divisions (MCDs) be used as building blocks for an alternative set of statistical areas for the New England States only. A single threshold of 25 percent to establish qualifying linkages between outlying counties and counties containing the CBSA cores has also been recommended.

OMB has allowed sixty (60) days for comments. To ensure consideration during the final decision making process, written comments must be received no later than December 20, 1999. The Comments should be sent to James D. Fitzsimmons, U.S. Bureau of the Census, IPC-Population Division, Washington, DC 20233-8860. The final standards will be announced by April 1, 2000. The actual areas, based upon 2000 Census commuting information will probably be available in 2003. The full text of the release is available from the COPAFS home page at:<http://members.aol.com/copafs/metro99>, and also at the OMB home page at:<http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/fedreg/msa-recommend.pdf>